

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ABILENE

other names/site number TIETJENS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

2. Location

street & number 300 N. MULBERRY STREET ☐ not for publication

city or town ABILENE ☐ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county DICKINSON code 041 zip code 67410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination  
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of  
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Roberts, DSHPO 3/18/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National  
Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ABILENE  
Name of Property

DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS  
County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: RELIGIOUS FACILITY

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: THEATER AND  
AUDITORIUM

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: GOTHIC; ROMANESQUE

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: LIMESTONE

walls STONE: LIMESTONE

roof ASPHALT

other

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1882 - 1931

**Significant Dates**

1882, 1907, 1931

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

ROBINSON, E.J. - BUILDER (1882-1883)

VOIGT, S.S. - BUILDER (1931)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ABILENE  
Name of Property

DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 4 6 5 4 4 8 10 4 3 0 8 9 4 10  
Zone Easting Northing  
2

3  
Zone Easting Northing  
4  
☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title NANC SCHOLL  
organization ABILENE HERITAGE COMMISSION date APRIL 2000  
street & number 813 N. OLIVE STREET telephone 785-263-7012  
city or town ABILENE state KS zip code 67410

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

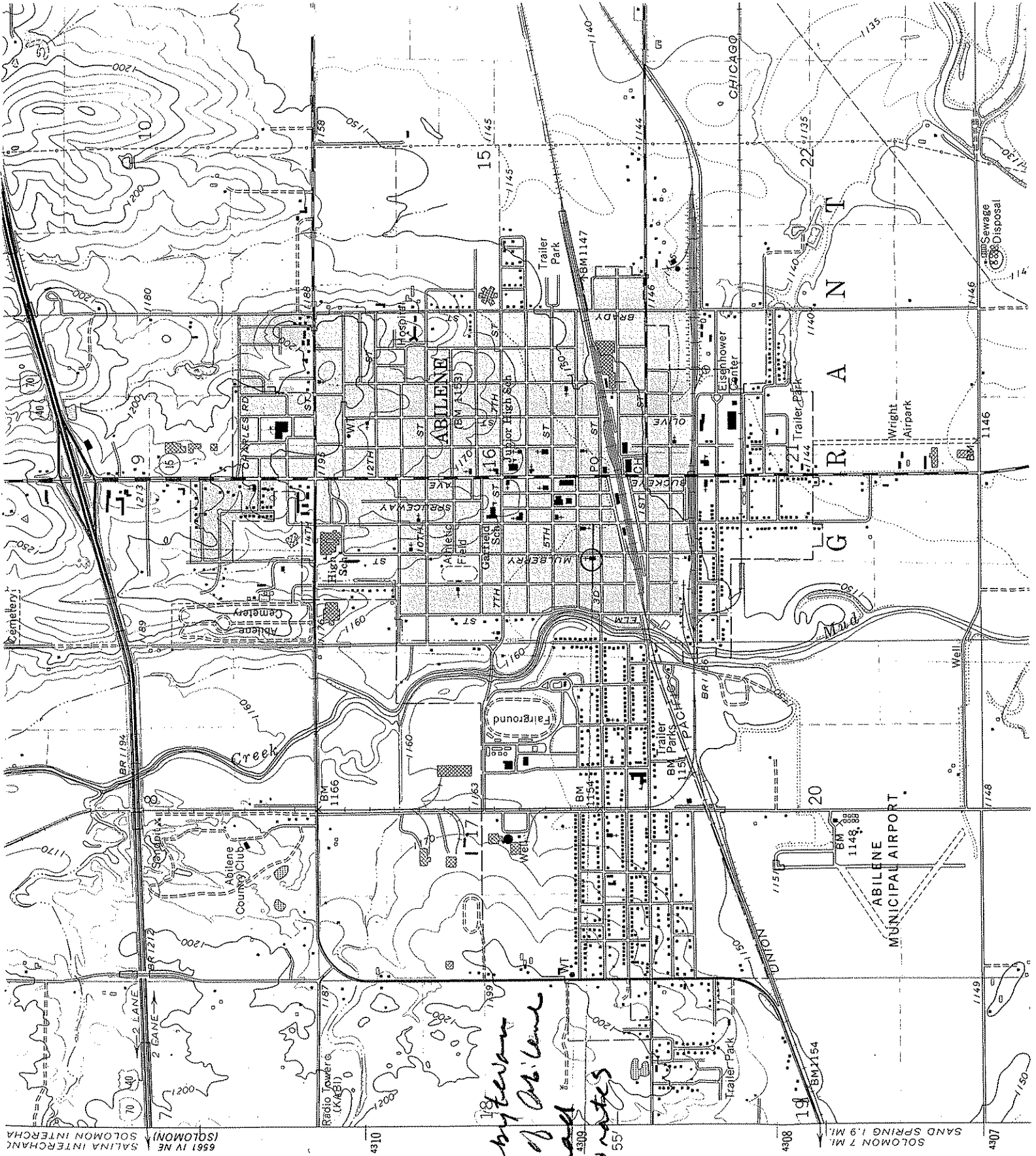
### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name TERRY TIETJENS  
street & number 1105 N. BUCKEYE telephone 785-263-1084  
city or town ABILENE state KS zip code 67410

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

*The First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, Kansas (c. 1882-1883) is located on the north west corner of Mulberry and North West Third Streets in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (populations 6,851). The rusticated limestone Romanesque and Gothic Revival church sits on a limestone foundation.*

*The original sanctuary building was basically square in form with bays on the south, west and north elevations. An entrance tower and two gables were found on the east elevation. The structure was surmounted by a complex roof structure that was shingled with wood shingles and accented with cast iron cresting and finials. Ten matching double hung and two single stained glass windows were located in the sanctuary. A large gothic arch window pierced the central gable. This window, and several other smaller windows, are believed to have been salvaged from an earlier church building that had been severely damaged in 1881 by a tornado. These windows, which are memorials to prominent early Abilene persons, are not consistent in style or color with the ten windows in the sanctuary. Arched entry doors pierced the bell tower and the north gable. Matching arched openings were located on the south and east façade of the tower, which was topped with a peaked roof that was pierced with a brick chimney. The bell in the tower is dated 1876, and was moved from the first church. The overall measurement of the original structure was 47 feet by 61 feet.*

*In 1907, the east façade of the building was "bumped out" to create room for a new Sabbath school. The projection was two stories, with a central gable flanked by matching towers. The gothic arched stained glass window was moved forward in the gable and hung over a triple double hung stained glass window. Each tower included three double hung stained glass windows on each of two floors. The north tower accommodated a turning staircase to the choir loft on the second floor. The windows were made to match the original sanctuary windows. The peaked roof structure and chimney were removed from the entry tower at this time. The basement under the sanctuary was added at this time, with access by burning stairs in the north tower.*

*In 1931, a large rectangular "new" sanctuary was added to the south elevation of the building. The 70 x 45-foot addition is a one-story structure with a basement that extends above ground level. A secondary entrance was added to the east facade near the juncture of the two buildings. The "new" sanctuary has eight double gothic arched windows, four each on the east and west facades, one smaller double window above the entrance door on the east facade, and two single and one triple window on the south facade. Exit doors are located near the north and south ends of the west facade. The windows are stained leaded glass with no design or markings other than color. Double hung windows at the basement level pierce all three facades beneath the arched gothic windows.*

*The interior of the original sanctuary, and Sabbath school retain a high degree of integrity. The walls are plaster with a textured finish over dark wood wainscoting. The vaulted ceiling is paneled with wood and trimmed with*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

---

*decorative wood beams. Three matching light fixtures from the 1931 addition have been moved into the sanctuary. The floors are hardwood with carpeted aisles. A raised platform, or stage, is located at the west end of the room. Originally, a set of organ pipes was centered between two stained glass windows on the west wall. One of the matching ten windows was removed when the "new" addition was added in 1931. The opening has been filled in with a wooden panel. The church pews were added in 1937. At the rear of the room, sliding wooden doors gave access to what was the Sabbath school area, which included overflow seating. This area has been divided and is being used as office space for the Great Plains Theatre.*

*The interior of the "new" addition has had canted theatre seating installed, creating two small rooms under the seating at the north end of the room, which serves as an entry hallway to the theater. Aisles go down the east and west sides leaving the outside walls of the room intact. The south end of the room features a raised stage with a gothic proscenium arch flanked by doorways on each side. Access stairs to the basement are located on the west side of the arch. A circular iron staircase has been added to the east side of the arch, giving access to dressing rooms. The arched windows on the south wall have been covered from the inside to control light backstage. The theater seats 240 people in new theater seating. The walls are plaster. The floor is carpeted.*

*An enclosed lift has been added to the entrance area giving access to the ground floor, basement, and "new" addition level. All levels are also accessed by stairs. Large men's and women's rest rooms have been added to the basement level, which retains its kitchen at the north end.*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

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*The First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, Kansas (1882-1883) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance as a Romanesque; Romanesque Revival; and Gothic Revival architecture. Eclecticism in early 20<sup>th</sup> century styles, notably in ecclesiastical interpretations, leads to a mixture of proportions and elements from the Romanesque and Gothic Revival traditions.*

*The First Presbyterian Church of Abilene is an eclectic interpretation that combines both the Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles. "Eclecticism in architecture is that method of design which selects elements from a variety of stylistic sources and combines them in a new and original way. At its worst, eclecticism can be no more than the copying and combining of certain elements from the past. At its best, it can be an imaginative synthesis of ideas which accrues to a new style expressive of a new set of conditions." (Pierson, p.126).*

*The Romanesque Revival style is characterized by massive articulated wall structures, round arches and powerful vaults, this style was used primarily for churches. Romanesque architecture is based on Roman and Byzantine elements in Western Europe in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Romanesque Revival became popular in America during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is most frequently applied in church design.*

*The shift toward Gothic in church design "was in large measure the result of the revival in interest in liturgy promulgated by the Cambridge Society in England, and The Ecclesiologist which is published, as well as by branch societies in the United States." (Roth, P.110-111) The Gothic Revival style is characterized by a steeply pitched roof, wall surface extending into gable without break and windows that extend into the gables.*

*"The Gothic Revival church, echoing its medieval inspiration, creates a picturesque effect by variety, irregularity, and contrasts. The tower with belfry is important as a symbol and as a design element. It may be flat, topped by a spire, or rise from the roof ridge as a bell cote. Omnipresent pointed-arch window openings may be single or grouped and of various shapes." (Rifkind, p.138)*

*The First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, Kansas, the second oldest in Abilene, began when half a dozen men and women gathered together on July 25, 1869. This was two months before the City of Abilene was chartered and the Abilene school system was organized. (History of the First Presbyterian Church - Abilene, Kansas)*

*The development of the church somewhat parallels the evolution of the growing community of Abilene. "Organized when Abilene was but a shipping point for the cattle of the western plains, the church has grown as Abilene has expanded in the agricultural and industrial life of Kansas. Its white stone building at the corner*



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

*of Third and Mulberry streets is one of the most beautiful of Abilene's many churches and is a center for much of the civic life of the community." (Abilene Reflector Chronicle, July 25, 1939)*

*The Rev. Isaac T. Whittemore, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Solomon City, moderated the organizational meeting and had oversight of both congregations until he moved in 1871. At the meeting, S. J. McFarren, William Harbison, Mrs. Eliza Hoyt, Mrs. Maggie Mahan, and Mrs. Margaret Phillips, were declared to be the First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, Kansas. For a period of time the congregation met at the county court house, which was located on the second floor of a building on the west side of Broadway Street in the 200 block. (Parent, Mrs. E. Fuller, Narrative account, 1938)*

*The young church became inactive in 1872 following the sudden death of its second pastor, the Rev. John L. Jones. On May 11, 1873, Rev. Timothy Hill, Synodical Missionary, reorganized the congregation and ordained Mr. Theo. Little, as Ruling Elder for a term of two years. The following members of the original organization were present: Mrs. Margaret Phillips (widow), Mrs. Margaret C. Mahan (wife of John H., lawyer), Mr. James Purvis (farmer), Mrs. James Purvis, Mr. Cyrus Kilgore (a lawyer), Mrs. Julia Ann Kilgore, Miss I. Jenny Purvis. The following were added to the roll on this occasion: Mr. Thomas Purvis (farmer), Mr. James Kiddoo, Mr. Geo. B. Seely (merchant), Mrs. Mary L. Seely, Mr. Theophilus Little (businessman), Mrs. Sarah E. Little (daughter of a congressman), Mr. John Wanless, Mrs. Virginia S. Wanless, Mrs. E. J. Parent (wife of E. Fuller, mercantile businessman) and Mrs. Anna J. Downes. (First Presbyterian Church, Abilene, Kansas July 25, 1869-Oct. 18, 1959) The congregation met at the Metropolitan Hall. (Parent, Mrs. E. Fuller, Narrative account, 1938), (Occupations from the files of the Dickinson County Historical Society)*

*The church's first building was erected and dedicated in 1876 in spite of hard times. Five years later, on September 29, 1881, a cyclone toppled the steeple, sending the bell and belfry through the main roof. The building was razed and a new building was built at the same location. Rev. W. H. Snyder and Mr. E. Fuller Parent went to Topeka to look over church buildings and the main part of the church (new part) is a replica of a church in Topeka. While the new church was being built, the congregation met at the Bonebrake Opera House. On August 12, 1883, a new stone church was dedicated. (First Presbyterian Church, Abilene, Kansas July 25, 1869-Oct. 18, 1959)*

*Noteworthy in the history of the church is the lengthy tenures of two pastors. The Rev. Dr. Francis S. Blayne became pastor in March of 1891. He served the congregation until his death, July 9, 1921. He was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. David Townley in October of the same year. After thirty-five years of faithful service, Dr. Townley retired in October of 1956. (Wyandt, C. C., Church History, July 26, 1931)*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section number** 8 **Page** 3

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*In 1907, an addition costing more than \$4,000 was added to the east side of the structure to accommodate the Sabbath School. (First Presbyterian Church, Abilene, Kansas July 25, 1869-Oct. 18, 1959)*

*In 1931, a new wing was erected to the south side of the Church with the proceeds of the estate of Mr. Elmer Hoyt, a successful farmer living north of Abilene. The residue of his estate amounted to approximately \$20,000. This addition, housing educational facilities and the Fellowship Room, was known as Hoyt Hall. This addition enlarged the original structure by approximately 2,850 square feet. The congregation refused to move into the new wing and continued to worship in the original sanctuary, which, with the addition of the Sabbath School area in 1907, was approximately 1,750 square feet. In 1937, new pews and pipe organ were installed in the original sanctuary. (First Presbyterian Church, Abilene, Kansas July 25, 1869-Oct. 18, 1959)*

*In September of 1968, the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, under the leadership of Rev. William H. Webster, marched from the church building to their new church on Fourteenth Street. The old building was rented to the Southern Baptist Church congregation, who later purchased the building from the Presbyterians. The corner stone was removed and taken to the new Presbyterian Church location.*

*In December of 1994 the building was purchased by Terry Tietjens, who dedicated it to his parents and deceased twin brother as a Center for the Performing Arts. The First Presbyterian Church congregation returned the corner stone, which was returned to its position on the southeast corner of the building in 1995.*

*Through the long history of the church, it has been the worship home to many of Abilene's most prominent citizens.*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   1  

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***Bibliography***

*1870, 1875, 1880 Census Records, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas.*

*Abilene Reflector Chronicle, July 25, 1939.*

*County Appraiser data, Dickinson County, Kansas 1995.*

*First Presbyterian Church Abilene, Kansas (unknown) 1959.*

*First Presbyterian Church Abilene, Kansas A Brief Chronology (unknown), 1985.*

*Obituary Files, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas.*

*Parent, Mrs. E. Fuller, Narrative account, 1938.*

*Pierson, William. American Buildings and Their Architects: Volume 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.*

*Rifkind, Carole, A Field Guide to American Architecture. New York: New American Library, 1980.*

*Roth, Leland M. A Concise History of American Architecture. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979.*

*Scheele, Lynda. Former Director, Dickinson County Historical Society.*

*Seventieth Anniversary, First Presbyterian Church, (unknown) 1939.*

*Wyandt, C. C., Church History, July 26, 1931.*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section number** 10 **Page** 1

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**Verbal boundary description**

*The nominated property is located on Lot 51 and Lot 53, except the West 10 feet of the south 90 feet thereof, and the East 20 feet of the north 50 feet of Lot 55, North Third Street, Thompson and McCoy's Addition to the City of Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas, subject to all easements restrictions and covenants of record. The property is bounded to the west by adjacent property lines, to the north by an alley, to the east by N. Mulberry Street and to the south by North West Third Street.*

**Verbal boundary justification**

*The nominated property includes the property historically associated with the First Presbyterian Church of Abilene.*